AGRICULTURAL ANALYSIS GUIDELINES

September 23, 2003

Guidelines should appropriately address the information desired, not detail the means to obtaining that information. They are intended to provide consistency in agricultural analyses and offer suggested formats to contain basic information.

I. GOALS

Goals of the agricultural analysis and indirectly, these guidelines are as follows:

A. To promote an efficient presentation of information for adequate and effective environmental review in meeting the requirements of CEQA.

B. To increase the efficiency of the environmental review process, to prevent unnecessary time delays, to standardize agricultural analyses, and to define the minimum information necessary.

C. To provide the project applicant sufficient information in a timely manner to permit appropriate planning decisions prior to finalizing project designs.

D. To identify significant agricultural resources, farmland and operations.

E. To ensure that information collected in past projects can have some utility in evaluating future projects in similar circumstances.

These guidelines are meant to guide the content of agricultural analyses and will be used to determine acceptability for use in environmental documents and extended initial studies.

II. REPORT FORMAT AND CONTENT

The following format is suggested for an agricultural analysis.

A. <u>Cover Page</u>

As a minimum, the cover page should include the name of the project, the list of permit number(s), the Department's environmental review number, the date of the analysis, the applicant's name and contact information, the preparer's name and contact information, and a signature block for the County-certified consultant overseeing the work performed. An example cover page is attached; this should be used as a guide only. Please feel free to revise to fit your own corporate style.

B. Summary of Findings/Executive Summary

Briefly state the results of the analysis and the impacts anticipated with any feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate potentially significant impacts.

C. Introduction

Briefly describe the proposed project, including the project type, size and location. Include a vicinity map of appropriate scale showing nearby roadways and other significant features. Briefly discuss any relevant agricultural highlights of the property and vicinity. A map/graphic should be used to show on-site and surrounding agricultural uses in the area.

D. Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework should include a discussion of State and County agricultural regulation, plans, and policies applicable to the proposed project. Relevant regulation that may be discussed include:

1. California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.
2. California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act.
3. San Diego County General Plan, Regional Land Use Element, Open Space Element, Conservation Element and relevant Community Plans.
4. San Diego County Zoning Ordinance.
5. County Board of Supervisor Policy.
6. San Diego County Agricultural Enterprises and Consumer Information Ordinance, §63.401 et seq.

E. Environmental Setting

Include a description of the agricultural resources, farmland and/or operations on the project site and in the vicinity of the project site as directed below. Include appropriate maps showing all on-site and surrounding land uses, with appropriate references to specific agricultural use types (i.e. avocados, citrus – oranges and grapefruits, flower crops and nurseries, livestock – dairy, cattle ranching etc.). Also, include maps showing existing zoning, general plan land use designations, agricultural preserves, Williamson Act contract lands, and maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency (i.e. areas mapped as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Other Lands) as appropriate.

Typically, the discussion of surrounding agriculture should have a radius of no less than 1 mile; however, in agricultural areas the surrounding vicinity may to have a radius as great as 3 miles or may be the boundaries of a community planning area or region. The boundary that is established

for the surrounding vicinity should serve as the cumulative analysis area, if the CEQA "List of Projects Method" is used (CEQA §15130 and 15355). County staff is available to assist with the development of an appropriate vicinity area.

1. Climate. Detail the climate in the project area, including regional weather station precipitation and temperature information. As a part of this discussion the analysis should identify the project's location in relation to the San Diego Plantclimate Map prepared by the University of California, Agricultural Extension Service and discuss the importance of area's climate as it relates to agriculture.

2. Cropping History and Suitability. Describe the cropping history on-site and existing cropping in the vicinity. Discuss the suitability of for crops such as grain, orchard, vineyard, pasture, range, etc., on-site and in the vicinity.

3. Land Use. Completely describe land uses on-site, in the project vicinity and show the project's proximity to surrounding agricultural uses. Include a description of current and planned land use designations on-site and in the vicinity. Include a description of current and planned zoning on-site and adjacent to the site. In particular, state if the project is located on or in proximity to General Plan Land Use Designation, Intensive Agriculture (19) or Agricultural Preserve (20). If the project site or lands in the vicinity of the project are a part of an existing agricultural preserve and identify the preserve number. If the preserve may be affected by the proposed project state any applicable requirements of the preserve.

4. Williamson Act Contract Lands. Identify whether the project site or lands in the vicinity of the project are a part of an existing Williamson Act contract. If the contract lands may be affected by the proposed project state any applicable requirements of the contract.

5. Important Farmland Map Category. Identify the Important Farmland Map Categories for the project site and vicinity. Define the Farmland Map Categories pursuant to the State definition, and discuss the importance of each category. If any areas on-site or in the vicinity have not been assigned an Important Farmland Map Category label these areas as Other Land.

6. Soils. Identify on a map/graphic all soil types on-site and off-site Identify whether the soils are prime agricultural and non-prime

agricultural soils. Identify the land capability class and storie index for each soil.

7. Water. Identify the type of water supply available to the project site and state whether the site is irrigated or dryland farmed. Discuss any seasonal water rate changes during drought conditions.

8. Agricultural Interface. Identify all existing agriculture operations and uses in the vicinity including cultivation, plowing, spraying, pruning, harvesting, drying, and crop protection which may generate dust, smoke, noise, pests (e.g. insects, rodents, etc.), odor, and the use of agricultural chemicals (pesticides). Based on the agricultural operations in the areas or on the results of the agricultural analysis a pesticide inventory of the surrounding area may be required. If applicable, staff will provide direction for completing a pesticide inventory and provide direction on obtaining information on pesticide permits issued by the Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measurements in the County of San Diego.

9. On-site Contamination. Identify historical use of agricultural chemicals on the project site. Also, identify the types of crops grown on-site, years grown, and likely chemicals used. Please indicate if any storage sheds or other agriculturally related structures were present. Due to the human health hazards that can result due to potential exposure or ingestion of contaminated soils, a Phase I or Phase II Environmental Site Assessment may be required based on the results of the agricultural analysis or staff's review of the project site.

10. Mapping of Information. All maps submitted with the agricultural analysis must be of a scale sufficient to show the location of the resources identified and their relationship to aspects of the project likely to adversely affect resources. Elevations and north directional arrows must be indicated on all maps. All north directional arrows should point towards the top of the page.

F. Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds of Significance must be developed for the proposed project to determine whether the project will have a significant impact to agricultural resources. Currently, the County of San Diego does not have any adopted Thresholds of Significance, however, Appendix G of the 2003 CEQA Guidelines contains questions that should be answered to determine significance under CEQA. The following questions should be used as the basis for choosing specific Thresholds of Significance for the proposed project:

AGRICULTURE RESOURCES – "In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?"

LAND USE AND PLANNING – Would the project:

b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal plan, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

G. Methods and Analysis Limitations

Include a description of methods used to complete the analysis, such as techniques used; dates, times, and conditions during any surveys; limitations and rationale for the surveys; and a map, where appropriate, showing location of the areas actually visited. If the LESA Model was used, indicate whether the model was completed pursuant to the California LESA Model Instruction Manual available online at http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/qh_lesa.htm.

H. Analysis of Project Effects and Significance Determination

1. Evaluate direct impacts that would result from project implementation, such as conversion of agricultural lands and farmland to a non-agricultural use. The LESA Model may be used to determine significance of converted farmland resources.

2. Indicate the percentage (or acreage) of significant agricultural lands, farmland, agricultural preserves, Williamson Act contract lands, and

Important Farmland Map Categories to be converted to a non-agricultural use by the proposed development.

3. Evaluate direct Williamson Act contract, agricultural preserve, or agricultural zoning conflicts. In lieu of any land use analysis or general plan conformance document the agricultural analysis should evaluate the project's conformance to any agriculture related County land use policies, including but not limited to the County general plan. If a land use analysis or general plan conformance document has been completed the relevant agricultural analysis should be summarized and cross-referenced.

4. Evaluate indirect impacts on-site and off-site as a result of project implementation such as, interface or fringe impacts to agricultural lands, soils, water quality, etc. Determine whether agricultural conversion will occur indirectly.

5. Discuss the impacts the project may have on surrounding agricultural resources and/or operations. Determine whether agricultural conversion will occur as a result of these impacts and whether existing operations will be limited by the proposed project and describe the extent of limited operations.

6. Analyze the significance of any agricultural conversion on a cumulative level pursuant to CEQA Guidelines (§15130 and 15355). If the CEQA "List of Projects Methods" is used, the established vicinity area for the proposed project should be utilized for evaluating past, present and future projects.

I. Mitigation Measures and Environmental Design Consideration

Discuss in detail any feasible mitigation measures that would reduce anticipated significant impacts to levels below significance, and where appropriate discuss any environmental design considerations. If agricultural open space easements or agricultural buffers are proposed as a part of the project they should be shown on a copy of the project map or plot plan. Feasibility of the mitigating actions should also be discussed.

If agricultural conservation easements are to be proposed pursuant to the California Farmland Conservancy Program the timing of the dedication of the easements must be discussed. Moreover, coordination with California Department of Conservation and the County may be necessary to ensure effective mitigation in lieu of an established program.

K. Conclusions and Recommendations

Include a recommendation for mitigation and brief summary conclusion.

L Certification

Provide names and qualifications of those participating in the fieldwork and in the report preparation. Ensure the principal consultant is County certified.

M. Qualifications

Persons preparing or responsible for agricultural analysis should have the following qualifications.

1. Sufficient formal educational background in appropriate areas of study to understand the importance of agricultural land uses.

2. Sufficient experience in agricultural resource evaluation and predicting quantifying environmental impacts.

N. Appendices

The appendices should include all worksheets and calculations used to support conclusions, including all LESA Model worksheets and graphics. As applicable, include any pesticide inventory and Phase I or Phase II Environmental Site Assessments.

PROJECT NAME
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
(GPA ##-###; REZ ##-###; TM ####, MUP##-### ; ER ##-##-###)

AGRICULTURAL ANALYSIS

SEPTEMBER 2003

Prepared for:

Applicant Name
Applicant Address
Applicant City. State, Zip

Submitted to:

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